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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR MAY 11, 2006

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for May 11, 2006. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

HURRIYET (CUKUROVA): Four people, who were arrested when they were caught with USD 4,000,000-worth of materials with which Captagon drugs can be produced in a textile factory in Gaziantep's Organized Industrial Zone in February, have been released by Adana's 7th Heavy Penalty Court to stand trial later. The suspects have been in prison for three months.

HURRIYET (CUKUROVA): Non-governmental organizations and political parties in Bitlis gathered at Bitlis's Chamber of Commerce and Industry to discuss the problems and to find solutions to natural disasters the city has experienced for 20 years.

BOLGE / EKSPRES: Seyhan Municipality's cleaning services workers have entered the third day of their strike in Adana (see press summary 05/09). Seyhan Mayor Azim Ozturk talked with the workers and requested from them to carry on with their work and not yield to provocations. Meanwhile, police have been investigating into identity of alleged actors inciting workers to strike.

BOLGE: Chairperson of Adana Commodity Exchange said that farmers have don't favor the cultivation of wheat and corn in the Cukurova region anymore because of an oversupply of such products, which yields insufficient economic returns.

OZGUR GUNDEM: In the last three months, Siirt Prosecutor initiated investigations against 27 students of the Siirt Education Faculty on charges of disseminating terrorist organization's propaganda and breaching codes on holding demonstrations and gatherings on such occasions as the World Women's Day, anniversary of Halabja massacre, and Newruz celebrations. Action has been brought against 7 of the students. Meanwhile, Jandarma teams which arrived at a dormitory at Van Centennial University to extinguish a fire that broke out have allegedly detained 6 students for keeping illegal documents in their rooms.

CUMHURIYET / RADIKAL / EVRENSEL / OZGUR GUNDEM: Eskisehir Heavy Penalty Court continued to hear the case of Ahmet (30) and Ugur Kaymaz (12), the father and son who were killed in November 2004 in Mardin's Kiziltepe district. Claimant's attorneys and defendant's attorneys blamed each other for using a discourse that politicized the case. The jurors rejected a petition by the claimants to conduct a study at the site of the incident and to have the defendants arrested in the course of their trial.

The court was adjourned until July 19.

CUMHURIYET / OZGUR GUNDEM: Seven more children, five of whom were under arrest, have been arraigned in Diyarbakir. The children dismissed accusations during their statements in the court hearing, which was not open to press members. A reported interesting development was that 18 police officers, who were wounded during the rioting in Diyarbakir late in March, were present at the courtroom to express their complaints. However, the officers said the children accused in that court session were not the ones that attacked the officers.

RADIKAL / OZGUR GUNDEM / HURRIYET: Jandarma Regiment Command filed a complaint against Tunceli mayor Songul Erol Abdil because of a speech Abdil delivered in Germany on April 29. An investigation has been started against Abdil. Meanwhile, the court gave verdict about two university students who allegedly gathered signatures in support of Abdullah Ocalan in Agri. The students are sentenced to ten months in prison and a fine of 416 YTL each. Separately, Diyarbakir's 4th Heavy Penalty Court heard the case of an Azadiya Welat newspaper representative and two employees of Ozgur Gundem daily newspaper who are being accused of disseminating terrorist organization's propaganda during efforts to hold referendum in support for Abdullah Ocalan.

RADIKAL: Representative of Delegation of European Commission in Turkey, Hans Jorg Kretschmer, told Diyarbakir Mayor Osman Baydemir during a reception in Ankara marking EU Day that the representatives of the Kurdish community should be more active in convincing (Kurdish) people to establish dialogue.

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